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STREET MUSIC.



DUTCH ITINERANT MUSICIANS.

BRADSHAW AND EVANS.]

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VOL. IV.

STREET MUSIC.

We presume that all our readers have seen a print of Hogarth's "Enraged Musician." Before the open window of an amateur are gathered the representatives of the street-music of London, composing an oratorio the richest and most ludicrous that ever was scored on canvas. A squalling ballad-singer, with a squalling child in her arms; a droning hautboy player, whose ears are as blind as his eyes; a knife-grinder chattering and whirring, and effectually taking the edge off he pretends to put on; a dustman, whose roar seems more likely to scatter than to collect the ashes of the grate; children playing at soldiers, with a drum and a racket; the squeal of the milkmaid; the shriller cry of the sweep; the thundering bawl of the fishman; the sound of a horn; the jangling of bells; with other combinations "too numerous to mention," form a picture as true as it is laughable, though our laughter leaves us little room to sympathise with the violinist, who is trying to stop his ears from the atrocious din.

Our ears, reader, are not exquisitely delicate in their perceptions of sound; and yet are we doomed daily to a trial nearly as severe as Hogarth's violinist. A new street of neat little houses in one of the rapidly-increasing suburbs of London attracted our longing eyes. Here, thought we, may a man of small means afford to be genteel, and yet keep that expensive affair, a family; here, "not remote from public view," but retired a little, as it were, on one side, might we, as through a loop-hole, gaze on the busy world of the metropolis, while the roar of the great Babel would reach us, mellowed by distance. And so, for a time, it was very snug. Occasional visitors praised the street; it was such a nice little street, so quiet, so *very* quiet. This was repeated until we began to suspect that it was too quiet, and to long for a little more noise. Alas! our wishes have been fulfilled.

Scarcely was the street finished, paved, and smoothed; scarcely was it known that at one end was a house containing "carriage" people, and opposite a house containing very genteel folks who kept very genteel lodgers; scarcely had circulars gone round, announcing that Mrs. Bubbington took a few young ladies to educate with her own dear daughter, over whom she would watch with the loving-kindness of a mother, and train for presentation at court with the precision of a milliner; scarcely had a few mistaken knocks and rings been made by callers on her Majesty's collector of assessed taxes, and two doctors' vehicles been seen grinning at each other—when the contents of Noah's ark began to pour daily through that hitherto quiet little street. A private watchman—that is to say, a man who voluntarily undertakes to walk, talk, and sleep in the street, and then voluntarily calls on you to pay him for so doing—extended his beat, and nearly threw a number of women and children into hysterics, by calling out, "Past two—all right!" Straightway he discovered that a post-office clerk had taken up his residence in the street, and so, for sixpence a week, he rouses him, and his neighbours, at four every morning. Sometimes, when the heavy, deadly thump on the door reaches our ear, we rub our eyes, and listen if the poor clerk does not throw up the window, indignantly demanding if the watchman really means to

affirm that it is four o'clock; but vainly have we waited for the reply—"Oh, botheration, no; I only knocked to say you might sleep an hour or two longer!" This disturbance over, we doze till the sweeps, at five precisely, ring the bell, and squeal, to rouse the heavy-headed and heavy-heeled housemaid over the way; and this rouses our own darling baby, who gives a squeak, and manifests a strong inclination to get up. To suppress this particular disturbance of the peace, an exercise of authority is necessary; and quiet being restored, we doze until the distant shrill announcement of "water-cresses" testifies that the anti-scorbutic early breakfast people are up, and that therefore it is time to get up too.

While at breakfast, a fellow, whose lungs are surely made of the hide of a shaggy bison, sets down his barrow, and bawls out "hearthstone" to a tune that almost sets coffee-pot and cups a-dancing. Then rival butchers commence ringing bells to receive their orders for the day; bakers' men repeat the process; and the old clothesman walks slowly past the window with his murmuring croak. The fishman follows; the greengrocer next, and the sound of his voice is heard in unison with "Buy a bonnet-bo!" meaning thereby a hand-box. The whole street for the whole forenoon is a chaos of sounds. Everything in season and out of season is yelled, bawled, and proclaimed throughout its extent. Apples and onions, salmon and bird-cages, potatoes and brooms, clothes-lines and codfish, while sturdy beggars ring bells as boldly as if they had come from the haberdasher's; handbills are put under the knockers, or sent floating down the areas, and cards are thrust under doors. Woe to sleeping babies and sick folks in that once quiet little street!

From morn till night, too, may be heard the hum of the hand-organ, or the jiggling of the hurdy-gurdy. The sight of a petticoat, or the sound of a child's voice, is enough for any one of that swarm of sallow, patient Germans who earn a subsistence by torturing the ears of the lieges; show one of them the tip of your nose at a window, and he will grind out his whole barrel-full of tunes, till you are obliged to send out a halfpenny to get him away, to be succeeded, in half an hour, by another of his tribe: while young Irish and English impostors from St. Giles's, dressed in the garb of "Buy-a-broom" girls, squat, like toads, at kitchen-windows, and squeak out their *Tyrolese* songs. All this might be endured, if it were *all*, or if peace came with nightfall. Alas! speeches are made by pretended Spitalfields weavers, or Manchester cotton-spinners; psalm-tunes and spiritual songs are drawled out by men and women who try to look pious, but cannot for the life of them; a clean-looking man, with a clean white apron, plays dolorously on a flute, while on each side of him are two nice bare-headed boys, with their hair nicely curled, and their faces very cleanly washed; and a shaky old man, who has clearly seen better days, comes trembling round, with his everlasting "Oh, no, we never mention her!" giving a round dozen shakes on every note. Then a parcel of young ladies, who cram a house in the street, have the reputation of being musical; and as the shades of evening begin to prevail, and tired nursemaids have just got their precious charges laid down in bed, sounds of fiddle, harp, and horn echo through the street. The street is, in fact, a portion of the evening-

beat of two distinct sets of itinerant musicians, who soon learn to know their patrons; and so, for sixpence each gang, the young ladies have the honour of evening performances opposite their windows.

Some attorney's clerk doubtless asks—Why don't you take advantage of the clause in the New Metropolitan Police Act, and get rid of the annoyance? Any inhabitant householder of any street, if aggrieved by the performances of Punch and Judy, dancing dogs, hand-organs, or hurdy-gurdies, may order them out of ear-shot, or give them in charge. Alas! who will dare to risk such a thing as overthrowing a time-hallowed institution? It is now a long time ago—a long time before the Flood—since Jubal became “the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ;” and from that day to this itinerant musicians have pursued their venerable calling. Would not the spirit of old Homer, who, we are gravely assured, is the oldest ballad-singer on record, frown darkly on the modern wretch who would try to crush his profession by the aid of a clause in a Police Act? All the bards of all the Celtic races would struggle to get back, to avenge their dishonour; and all the minstrels of the middle ages would rise in revolt. Besides, “music hath charms”—hath it not? Have not the philosophers, for these five thousand years, been trying to find out what it is that thus acts upon us in the shape of melodious sounds, and they have not yet succeeded in discovering it—or, at least, in accurately defining it? And yet music swells courage, soothes grief, raises anger, affects to sadness, and dissipates melancholy. Nay, it has been affirmed to cure diseases: while venomous serpents, at the sound of pipes, rear their lithe necks, looking beautiful and harmless; dogs howl with pleasure at the sound of fiddles; and Disraeli records (*as a trial of credulity*) how one prisoner, in the memorable Bastille, gathered mice around him by the sound of his lute; and another used to fetch a spider regularly to bait by the sound of bagpipes. How then can a clause in a Police Act overthrow that which inspires men and brutes? What says our truly immortal bard, he whose poetry is philosophy, and whose philosophy is poetry?

“The poet

Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature:
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.”

Was, then, our great moralist, Doctor Samuel Johnson, a man not fit to be trusted? “In the evening,” says Boswell, “our gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle. Johnson desired to have ‘Let Ambition fire thy Mind’ played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it; though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the power of music. I told him that it affected me to such a degree as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest of the

battle. ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool!’”

But we are wandering from our proper theme. Our intention, in starting, was not to give a disquisition on music in general, but on street-music in particular. But what a subject is even street-music? Thousands of years ago, as Wilkinson assures us, hired musicians in old Egypt attended convivial parties, with harp, lute, pipe, guitar, and tambourine, accompanying their instruments by their voices. “Music,” he says, “was always indispensable, whether at the festive meetings of the rich or poor; and they danced to the sound of the harp, lyre, guitar, pipe, tambourine, and other instruments; and in the streets even to the drum. Many of their postures resembled those of the modern ballet; and the pirouette delighted an Egyptian party upwards of three thousand five hundred years ago.”

We must therefore eschew this tremendous subject: for we should have to fiddle our readers down the stream of time, from the sons of the Nile to Jack seated on the capstan, and cheering his companions as they “Yeo heave ho!” by scraping catgut. Contenting ourselves with the belief that

“the birds instructed man,

And taught him music ere his art began,”

we must skip over the music of Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, and come to our own. The bards of the Celtic nations, including the British tribes, were important personages, who sang the praises of great chieftains and warlike deeds, and threw around the dark disc of barbarism a halo of imagination; while their successors, the minstrels, in the middle ages, who wandered from town to town, enacted a similar part, in a somewhat more refined manner, for the delectation of a period more advanced. But, alas! a time was to come when even the minstrels, who could once number in their ranks a Cœur-de-Lion and a Clifford, were to find their occupation useless, and therefore degraded. A statute of Queen Elizabeth classed minstrels with jugglers, bear-wards, fencers, common players of interludes, tinkers, and pedlars, who were all to be considered as rogues and vagabonds, and to be punished accordingly. Alluding to this statute, a Dr. Bull penned some sarcastic lines, in which he said of the poor minstrels—

“Beggars they are by one consent,

And rogues by act of parliament.”

The attendance of itinerant musicians at FAIRS was one of the adaptations of the middle ages. Fairs were themselves adaptations; contrivances for bringing together as many people as possible, in order to create a market, when times were unsettled—when roads were bad, unsafe, and troublesome—and when towns were distant from each other. The word “fair” is derived from a Latin word signifying a holiday; and at most fairs the attendance was frequently extraordinarily great. Merchants and musicians, buyers and sellers, flocked to them, as the great occasions of their lives; money, mirth, and music, being combined to render them attractive. The advance of civilisation is sweeping away the fairs of Britain, blotting out some, and rendering others of less consequence; the same thing will take place, though more slowly, over the Continent. Gray sung “The Bard,”

the last of his race; Sir Walter Scott chanted the "Lay of the Last Minstrel;" and Sir David Wilkie immortalised the unsophisticated "Blind Fiddler," he who is now rarely seen in poor men's cottages, exchanging a little merry sound for hospitality. Our modern itinerant musicians are but the *lees* of a former period. The "waits" at Christmas are breaking up; and though sophisticated itinerants are to be seen in large towns, humming on board steam-boats, or visiting watering-places, the character of the profession has undergone that change which precedes dissolution; and perhaps our wandering musicians, finding no sympathy and support on the highways and byways—no fairs, at which to reap harvests of pence, and scarcely even children for whom to pipe—may disappear from the face of society altogether! Poor itinerants! ye have maintained your footing in this world of ours for several thousand years, in all countries, under various skies, and amongst different nations;—for several thousand years have ye exchanged soft sounds for hard cash, or given airy nothings for solid beef and pudding;—and it grieves us to think that a time is coming when ye will no more be found, in village, fair, or market!

Look at our picture. These are Dutch itinerant musicians—such as are to be found, even to this day, wandering from place to place, and inspiring the heavy Vanderhooks by their "divine art." Is not that old fellow with the fiddle quite a character in his way? Burns, in his exquisite "Jolly Beggars," has painted

"A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,

Wha used at trysts and fairs to driddle:"—

But our fiddler is not a pigmy. His little companion, blowing a drone on the bagpipes, is, however, not unworthy notice; still less must we overlook the *connoisseur* "blowing a cloud" behind the fiddler, whose appreciation of the music is worthy of himself and the *artistes*. Here we pause; only, kind reader, "please to remember the musicians!"

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.

WHEN Dr. Franklin was minister of the United States in France, says the *National Gazette*, he was often importuned by persons unknown to him to give them letters of recommendation. For cases of this kind, and when it was impossible to refuse, he prepared the following model, and in some instances actually employed it to shame persons making such indiscreet applications, and in some measure to stop them:—

"Paris, April —, 1777.

"Sir,—The bearer, going to the United States, presses me to give him a letter of recommendation, although I know nothing of him—not even his name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here. Sometimes, indeed, one person unknown brings another equally so to recommend him; and sometimes they recommend one another. As for this gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his character and morals, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I possibly can be. I recommend him, however, to those civilities which every stranger, of whom we know no harm, has a right to; and I request you will do him all the good offices, and show him all the favour that, on further acquaintance, you shall find him deserve.

"I have the honour to be, &c."

CHRONICLES OF THE PONT NEUF.

NO. I.

WE have our "Chronicles of London Bridge," and right excellent they are; why does not some French literary antiquary give his countryman a work on the principal bridges of Paris? We ourselves long lived, while in that capital, in full view of the Pont Neuf, one of its noblest as well as most useful edifices; and as it always interested us much, we are willing to try even our poor hand, however imperfectly, to supply the omission. Those of our readers who have visited, or know anything of the French capital, are aware that it is the longest, broadest, and most important bridge, and is the grand bond of union between the northern and southern portions of the city and suburbs, dis severed as these are by the double channel of the river Seine. It is to the city of Paris what the heart is to the body of man; being the centre of the never-ceasing flux and reflux of the vital current. It is by far the most frequented of all the Parisian bridges, though by no means (as the inhabitants of the French capital fondly think) the most so of any "pontifice" in Europe.* A man who loses sight of a friend or relation in the French capital, and knows nothing of his "whereabouts" there, need only take his station for an hour or two daily on the Pont Neuf, and if he do not turn up soon, he may all but conclude that he is no longer in town. The police agents know this well: the average limit they give is three days; if in that time "their man" do not appear to the watchful eyes of the judiciously-posted myrmidons of the Prefecture, they commonly give up the quest in despair. In times anterior to the first French revolution, it was popularly reported of this bridge, that every quarter of an hour there passed over it at least one abbé, one soldier of the royal guard, a capuchin friar, a woman of the town, and a white horse. *Mais nous avons change tout cela*, as Sganarelle would say; we have (indeed) altered all that. You might stand long enough there *now*, before you could discover an individual of the first three classes of personages.†

The Pont Neuf (New Bridge), maugre its name, though by no means the oldest of the bridges of Paris, is anything but "new"—its first foundations having been laid on May 30, 1578, by Henry III.‡ Its construction, often interrupted by the wars (civil and other) of those troublous times, was not terminated till 1604, the fifteenth year of the reign of Henry IV. Six years thereafter, on the assassination of that great and kind-hearted, though rather profligate monarch, his widowed queen, Marie de Medicis, willing to give a public testimonial of her respect for his memory and regret for his loss, set about erecting a statue, which, in after-years as now, formed a principal feature of this massive bridge. With this view she applied to her father, Cosmo II., grand duke of Tuscany, for the gift of a colossal horse in antique

* In the recent inquiries into the expediency of throwing open our metropolitan paying bridges to the public, it was minutely ascertained, by careful and repeated computation, that the average number of foot passengers alone, who daily pass over London Bridge, amounts to no fewer than 170,000. Blackfriars' counts about 60,000 less.

† The royal guard, revived by the Bourbons, was discontinued in 1830. All orders of religious, with the exception of the *frères et sœurs de la Charité* (brothers and sisters of Charity), who attend at the public hospitals and asylums, were abolished nearly forty years before.

‡ The *badouins*, or cockneys of Paris, give another reason for the epithet *neuf*, which in French means *nine* as well as *new*, and say it arises from the remarkable position of the bridge, which has exactly that number of streets ending at just so many approaches to it. The fact is, the name thus given to it was merely to distinguish it from the Pont au Change, and others already in "time-honoured" existence. Three or four of its elders are eminently historical. As the imbecile king who laid its first stone had that same day accompanied to the grave the remains of his two most cherished (though unworthy) favourites, De Quelus and De Maugiron, the wags of the time pretended to anticipate that he would assuredly call it *Le Pont des Fleurs*—"The Bridge of Tears."

bronze, and of exquisite Grecian make, that had for some time adorned one of the public piazzas of Florence. The vessel that was charged in the first instance with its conveyance, encountering foul weather in its early passage, got bilged, and sunk—luckily near enough, however, to the Italian shores to be fished up, though with great difficulty, the following year, and was none the worse for its twelvemonths' stay at the bottom of the ocean. The horse thus obtained, she ordered her sculptor Dupré to fit a man to it; and the two combined formed the original equestrian statue of Henry IV. The place chosen for it was admirable, being the precise spot, on an elevated platform plane with the bridge, at the extreme wedge-shaped point of the Isle de la Cité, where its successor now stands.

This statue, like the great king it represented, had its vicissitudes to bear withal; it also (like him, too) came to a sudden and violent end. Up to the stormy times of the first French Revolution, it was viewed by the citizens of the capital it adorned with the utmost respect; nay, even at the earliest access of the democratic brain-fever, it was treated with a consideration bordering on idolatry: but, alas! such are the mutations of the popular mind, that five short years thereafter the very people who had in a manner fallen prostrate before it, ignominiously hurled it from its base, amidst loud execrations against him it represented—the earliest, no less than against Louis XVI., the ill-fated and (apparently) latest of the Bourbon line of kings.

The event first hinted at was the furious riot of the 24th August, 1787, in which eight citizens were shot by the *guet*, or armed police—an event prelude to the terrible Revolution that so soon followed. It was occasioned by the forced retirement of the ministry of M. de Brienne. The king and the parliament of Paris were then in declared opposition to each other. The partisans of the latter fairly routed the soldiers, the field of battle being the centre of the bridge, close to the statue, and extending to the opposite Place Dauphine. The same evening, being left in possession of the contested ground, they forced all passengers to do homage to the statue of the “people's king,” and caused many “carriage-folks” to turn out for that purpose. The statue was still more formally honoured on the 15th, 16th, and 17th July, 1790—the days immediately succeeding the famous Confederation of the Champ de Mars; on the first of which days a solemn service, with music, including the *Te Deum laudamus* and the *Dominus exaudiat*, was performed at its foot by the clergy of the parish of St. Bartholomew, in honour of “the brave and gallant” Henry—*le roi vaillant*. The statue itself was profusely decorated with ribands and flowers. To the church services, and solemn homage of the municipal authorities, succeeded dances, which lasted the remainder of these three days. In short, it was quite a *fête* for the statue! The day of its disgrace and displacement was the sadly memorable 11th August, 1792. So determined were the people that the melting-pot should not be balked of its prey, that the process at the foundry was actually *watched*, as they no doubt feared that the same trick might be played there as to our republicans in the case of the statue of Charles I. at Charing Cross.*

The present chronicler has mentioned the “great frequentedness” (as an American would say) of the Pont Neuf. Yet did the eyes that guide the pen which now traces its history once see it deserted of every soul for nearly four hours at mid-day!—a sight which no living man will probably ever live to see again. This was

on the eventful 28th of July, 1830. Each end was that day blocked up for the time mentioned by the troops of Charles the Tenth; their plan being to cut off one-half of Paris from the other, the easier to conquer the whole, by rendering communications imperfect. The plan failed. Meantime, sentinel after sentinel stationed on the bridge being “picked off” by the insurgents' shots, well aimed from the nearest windows, their officers ceased at last to send more victims; and the bridge remained, such as we have stated, altogether deserted.

We do not pretend to much method in these our Chronicles, else the reader would hardly pardon us for reverting to A.D. 1810. In the winter of that year an event happened on this ground, which, though of a private nature, and of small public and no national importance, may interest those who have gone thus far with us in these Chronicles. The whole particulars about to be given we can vouch for as being perfectly authentic.

We have already mentioned the Place Dauphine.* Its furthest houses abut on the centre of the bridge, and face the great statue. In its centre is a monumental fountain, crowned with a bust of the republican hero General Désarès, killed at Marengo in 1800 (14th of June). Close to the latter is a guardhouse—the very same that was stormed and taken by the rioters of 1787. On the 9th of December of the year above mentioned, that post was held by a subaltern's guard of the 102d regiment of the line. About two o'clock in the morning of the 10th, a middle-aged man of respectable appearance presented himself to some of the soldiers straggling about the place or square (which also forms a kind of back court to the Palais de Justice), and told them that he had just come from a noted gambling-house in the Palais Royal, where he had gained a considerable sum at play; he also showed them a plump-looking little canvas bag, full of specie. Be it observed, that it was not at all unusual, in those days and since, for individuals in such cases to apply at the nearest military posts for a guard to see them safely home; and in his instance this was the more urgent, as he said he thought he had been followed thus far by three very suspicious-looking men, who perseveringly dogged his steps, and walked, as he said, “on his very shadow.” Two of the soldiers, on hearing his statement, eagerly consented to be his escort, and immediately set out with him, after arming themselves in the adjoining guardhouse, and pretending to get permission of the sous-lieutenant; but who, it was afterwards proved, was at the moment fast asleep. Their protégé, mistaking the alacrity of these men, either for an evidence of their obliging disposition, or an anxious desire to obtain the gratuity usually given on such occasions, set out with them in full confidence; but scarcely had he got half over the bridge, when he found himself suddenly set on from behind, and mercilessly belaboured, till he was quite senseless, by these villains, with the but-ends of their muskets; and he was then, as he afterwards found, precipitated over the bridge-parapet into the chilly waters of the Seine. Fortunately for him, he fell upon a shelving sand-bank accumulated near one of the bridge-piers, his head well out of the deep waters, where he lay, as he supposed, insensible for nearly an hour. At last, however, he began to come to himself a little, and ultimately crawled to a drier berth. He then found he had been stripped to the shirt and trousers—his hat, his shoes, and all his gold and silver, gone. Being miserably chilled, and also enfeebled from wounds and bruises, he now ran a great risk of perishing with cold; for his cries were too weak to be easily heard by any chance passenger on the bridge, or stray way-faring man near the shore. He *was* heard, or discovered, however, when almost exhausted. The first

* The existing statue was set up by the restored Bourbons in 1818. The founders—Bonapartists, no doubt, at heart—furtively placed two small models of their idolised emperor, one in the hollow of each arm of the king's figure. This they have since owned, now that the events of 1830 have made it safe to do so. When the time of the second destruction shall arrive (is it far off?) these imperial images will no doubt come to light.

* So called ever since 1608, when its name was changed by order of Henry IV., to commemorate the birth of the young dauphin, afterwards Louis XIII.

place he was taken to by those who extricated him was the nearest guardhouse, and that was, of course, the very place he had started from on his unlucky journey homewards,

On his arrival at the post in this pitiable plight, he told his story to the lieutenant on duty, who immediately gave him a reception both courteous and warm; sent for cordials to revive him, till a surgeon could be got to dress his wounds and bruises; wrapped him in his own military cloak, and placed him beside the comfortable guardhouse fire. On giving a description of the offenders, the officer recognised them immediately as two of his own men. By this time, however, the latter were absent, as sentinels, on stations at some distance; and there they were allowed to remain till relieved in regular course. As soon as the hour of relieving guard was come, their victim was hidden from their view in a recess close by, and they were sternly asked by their commander why they had dared to leave the post without leave; but, above all, what they had done with the man whom they had undertaken faithfully to protect? They assumed a contrite air, and humbly craved pardon for the former offence; with an affected candour, they owned also to having allowed themselves to be treated with drink by the man, who had tried to corrupt them! and wished to lead them to a distance from their post; but that they had firmly refused, &c. &c.; that this, indeed, was the cause of their short absence; but that they had had nothing further to do with him. They supposed, however, (although they had no doubt he was indeed a very *mauvais sujet*—a great rascal!) that he had long ago got safe home. Upon this the lieutenant ordered the accuser to advance. The situation of the several parties was quite dramatic—the villains were utterly confounded at this unwelcome and unexpected apparition, and knew not what to say! Being immediately put under close arrest, they were afterwards duly tried, convicted, branded with a hot iron, and sent to the galleys for life.*

And so end for the present the Chronicles of the Pont Neuf. We hope our readers will have as much—and that will not be a little—pleasure in the reading as we have had, and hope yet to have, in writing them.

* This branding is applied to the backs of French criminals. If the sentence of imprisonment be for a limited time, with the letters T. F. (*travaux forcés*) "hard labour;" if for life, T. P. (*travaux à perpétuité*) "hard labour for ever." The last is the sentence lately passed on Madame Lafarge—omitting the branding.

THE ENGLISH POETS.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

"I CONSIDER Chaucer," says Warton, in his History of British Poetry, "as a genial day in an English spring. A brilliant sun enlivens the face of nature with an unusual lustre; the sudden appearance of cloudless skies, and the unexpected warmth of a tepid atmosphere, after the gloom and the inclemencies of a tedious winter, fill our hearts with the visionary prospect of a speedy summer; and we fondly anticipate a long continuance of gentle gales and vernal serenity. But winter returns with redoubled horrors: the clouds condense more formidably than before; and those tender buds and early blossoms which were called forth by the transient gleam of a temporary sunshine, are nipped by frosts and torn by tempests." Before Chaucer arose, no English poets, worthy of the name, had produced anything of which the memory is preserved; for the metrical romances which form the staple of the poetical productions of an earlier date, are, almost all, translations from other languages, and have suffered much in the transmutation. Chaucer, it is true, borrows from others, after the manner of his predecessors; but it is to add new graces to his originals. His productions were very numerous, and their singular excellence has justly entitled him to the venerable title of the Father of English Poetry.

But as English poetry rose with Chaucer, so with him, for a long lapse of years, it sunk. His contemporaries, indeed, though none approached his excellence, seemed animated by something of his spirit. The author of that very singular poem, "Piers Plowman's Vision," Gower, Occleve, and Lydgate—but especially Gower—display poetical talent; but no succeeding generation arose to follow in their footsteps. With the reign of Richard II.—who was himself a man of considerable taste and an encourager of literature—began that series of domestic troubles which put a stop to the progress of the polite arts in England, till the termination of the wars of the two Roses permitted the blighted plant once more to raise its head in the sunshine of peace. Its first shoots, then, were not so vigorous as those of its former powerful rush upwards, but more slowly advancing, they have still continued, in spite of many unkindly frosts and storms, to push forth bright flowers; nor do these, like the aloe, blossom only once in an age.

The difficulty, in reality slight, but in appearance formidable, of reading and understanding the writings of Chaucer, with that ease which is necessary for the full enjoyment of poetry, whose peculiar province it is to please, too often condemns them to dusty obscurity on a forgotten shelf. The attentive perusal of a single poem will enable the reader to surmount every obstacle to the pleasure, which is sure to reward him most amply for his pains; but in our extracts we shall endeavour to smooth the way for him, by some modifications of spelling, and the use of a few marks, pointing out some of the chief deviations from modern pronunciation. We fear this is rather a dangerous experiment, and that we may hazard the loss of some of the more delicate beauties of the poetry in its execution. We are far from desiring such a mode of publication to be adopted in any perfect edition of the poems; but we determined upon making use of it here, in the hope of inducing a greater number of our readers to venture on these pages than might have been the case had we adhered more strictly to the original; and if the acquaintance thus gained with that great master, who "appeared with all the lustre and dignity of a true poet in an age which compelled him to struggle with a barbarous language and a national want of taste,*" should induce them to seek a more intimate knowledge, the insight we shall endeavour to give into the peculiarities of his diction will, we trust, be found a not totally inefficient aid in attaining that object; and may perhaps prove, in some sort, the key to a book which should not be left unopened by any admirer of true poetry.

The birth of Chaucer, which is fixed by his biographers in 1328, rests upon the authority of his tombstone, erected long after his death, on which it was stated that he died in 1400, at the age of seventy-two. It appears that he was born in London, since he calls himself a Londoner, in his "Testament of Love;" but nothing certain is known of his family. Speght, one of his early biographers, makes his father a vintner, who died in 1348, one Richard Chaucer, who, according to Stowe, left a tenement and tavern to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, and was buried there in that year; but there is no proof that this Richard was the father of the poet, and the name was not uncommon, and is to be found in several records from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Edward I. This latter fact has been made the ground of an assertion that he was of a noble family; while the signification of the name of *Chaucier*, a shoemaker,* has been thought sufficient to prove the contrary. The heralds gave their opinion "that he descended not of any great house, which they gather by his arms;" and we are thus left entirely in the dark regarding his origin.

The place of his education is a matter of uncertainty. Oxford and Cambridge contend for the honour; while some of his biographers, to settle the difficulty, will have it that he studied at both; but his works sufficiently testify that, wherever he studied, he did so with good effect. He appears to have acquired a very great proportion of the learning of his age, and became a master of its philosophy, poetry, and such languages as formed the inter-

* Warton.

† Or a breeches-maker: etymologists are undecided which.

course between men of learning—especially Italian, with which he was evidently well acquainted.

After leaving the university, he travelled through France and the Netherlands; and on his return—the period of which we are ignorant of,—he is said to have entered himself of the Inner Temple; but even this fact depends chiefly on a record without a date, which Speght says a Mr. Buckley had seen, where Geoffrey Chaucer was fined “two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet-street.”

He did not pursue the study of the law, but attached himself to the court; but when he did so, and in what capacity, is not known. The first certain knowledge we possess of his success in this career is the patent, Rymer, 41 Edward III., by which the king grants him an annuity of twenty marks (about 200*l.* of our money), by the title of *valetius noster* (our valet or yeoman), the intermediate rank between squire and groom. There is no trace of the particular service for which this pension was conferred. It is certain that he had already distinguished himself as a poet; as the “*Assemblee of Fowles*,” (i. e. fowls, not fools, as some might read it), the “*Complaint of the Blacke Knight*,” and the translation of the “*Roman de la Rose*,” were all composed before 1367, the date of the patent; and there is therefore great reason for presuming that the liberality of the sovereign is to be ascribed to the merits of the poet.

He early attached himself to the Duke of Lancaster (John of Gaunt), and like him was an enemy to the corruptions and usurpations of the church of Rome, and a supporter of the doctrines of Wickliffe, who boldly exposed the evils which were attendant on the religious system then prevailing. In various parts of his poems, he satirises the monks and friars severely, but not unjustly; and in the “*Canterbury Tales*” especially, opposes their conduct to that of the parish priest, or “*person*,” with admirable effect. His connexion with the Duke of Lancaster was further strengthened by his marriage with Philippa, the sister of Katherine Swynford, the duke’s mistress, and afterwards his wife; but a doubt exists whether this marriage took place in 1360, when Chaucer was thirty-two, or twenty years after.

In 1372, he was sent by King Edward on an embassy to Genoa, and in his commission is designated *scutifer noster*, our squire*; an increase of rank since the grant of his annuity. The object of his embassy is not known; but it is reported by his biographers, that on this occasion he visited Petrarch at Padua, and we are inclined to believe this to be true, from the passage in the “*Clerk’s Tale*,” in which he says the story was told to him by Petrarch at Padua; although Mr. Tyrwhitt, the acute and learned editor of the “*Canterbury Tales*,” doubts both embassy and visit, from the total silence of biographers and history as to the object of the embassy. By some means, however, he appears to have obtained a fresh claim upon the royal bounty; since, in 1374, he had a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily, and in the same year he received the grant of the office of comptroller of the customs of wool, and also of comptroller of the *parva custuma vinorum*, &c. in the port of London. These offices he is said to have executed with great integrity, as well as advantage.

From some unexplained cause, his affairs became so deranged that he was obliged to have recourse to the king’s protection, to screen him from his creditors; and in 1384, his attachment to the Duke of Lancaster led him to support the re-election of John of Northampton, a Wickliffite lord-mayor, who was extremely obnoxious to the king. A great disturbance took place, and Chaucer was obliged to take refuge, first in Hainault, then in France, and finally in Zealand. When he at length ventured to return, he was seized and sent to the Tower, from whence he was

only liberated on making certain disclosures, which exposed him to the reproaches of his party; who had, however, made their peace before his return, but had totally neglected to stipulate for his pardon. To alleviate his regret for this treatment, and partly to vindicate his conduct, he now wrote his “*Testament of Love*,” which furnishes us with the foregoing details.

In 1391, he wrote his learned treatise on the Astrolabe, for the use of his son Lewis, who was then ten years old; and this is the only circumstance respecting his family which we have on his own, or any authority that deserves credit.

Chaucer died on the 25th of October, 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the great south cross-aisle. The monument to his memory was erected above a century and a half after his decease, by Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford, a poet, and a warm admirer of his works. It stands at the north end of a magnificent recess, formed by four obtuse foliated arches, and is a plain altar, with three quatrefoils, and the same number of shields. The inscription and figures on the back are almost obliterated.

Chaucer appears to have been an indefatigable writer; the number of works that have come down to us being very considerable, and there is little doubt that many of his minor pieces are lost. The “*Canterbury Tales*,” his capital work, has been excellently edited by Mr. Tyrwhitt; but the other poems have never been subjected to the same laborious revision and collation with manuscripts which he bestowed. We cannot here give a catalogue of all these works, some of which—as the “*Flower and the Leaf*,” and the “*House of Fame*,” and several of the “*Canterbury Tales*,”—are familiar in the versions of Pope and Dryden. But neither of these poets were contented with merely modernising the phraseology of their elder brother, and both have added so much, and altered so freely, as to leave but little of the original work apparent.



The portrait here introduced is copied from an illumination in Oocleve’s poems; a manuscript in the Royal Library, British Museum, marked 17 D 6. The poet, after speaking in high term

* Not shield-bearer, as it has been erroneously translated. *Scutifer* and *armiger* are both terms equivalent to the French *escuyer*, or English *squire*, and signifying a rank entitling the owner to carry armorial bearings, and standing next to that of knight. It is probable that Chaucer, who was not entitled by birth to any heraldic distinction, had obtained a grant of arms, which probably was acceded on the present occasion, to enhance his dignity as ambassador.

of his "worthy maister Chaucer," and lamenting "that the honour of the English tongue is dead," goes on to say,

"Although his lyfe queynte [ended] be, the re-rem-blauce
Of hym hath in me so fresh livenesse
Thatte to putte other men in re-mem-brance
Of his persone, I have here the likenesse
Do make: to this end in sothefastnesse
That they that have of hym lost thought and mynde
By this peynturé may ageyn hym fynde."

Accordingly, he has drawn his portrait in fair colours on the margin of the introductory page, and written above it "Chaucer's ymage."

This portrait is the authority from which the poet's "pictures" are made up; and is the only one on which dependence can be placed.

His personal appearance is alluded to in the following lines in the "Canterbury Tales," which are quite accordant with the figure depicted by Occleve:—

"Whan sayd was this mirácle, every man
As sober was, that wonder was to see,
Till that our host to jape he began,
And then at erst he looked upon me,
And sayed thus; What man art thou, quoth he?
Thou lookest as thou wouldest find an hare,
For e'er upon the ground I see thee stare."

"Approché near, and look up merrily.
Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place.
He in the waist is shapen as well as I:
This were a poppet in an arm t' embrace
For any woman small and fair of face.
He seemeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he dalliance."

A PERILOUS SITUATION.

On my return from the Upper Mississippi, I found myself obliged to cross one of the wide prairies which, in that portion of the United States, vary the appearance of the country. The weather was fine; all around me was as fresh and blooming as if it had just issued from the bosom of nature. My knapsack, my gun, and my dog, were all I had for baggage and company. The track which I followed was only an old Indian trace; and as darkness overshadowed the prairie, I felt some desire to reach at least a copse, in which I might lie down to rest. The night-hawks were skimming over and around me, attracted by the buzzing wings of the beetles, which form their food; and the distant howlings of wolves gave me some hope that I should soon arrive at the skirts of some woodland.

I did so; and almost at the same instant a fire-light attracted my eye. I moved towards it, full of confidence that it proceeded from the camp of some wandering Indians. I was mistaken. I discovered by its glare that it was from the hut of a small log-cabin, and that a tall figure passed and repassed between it and me, as if busily engaged in household arrangements.

I reached the spot, and presenting myself at the door, asked the tall figure, which proved to be a woman, if I might take shelter under her roof for the night. Her voice was gruff, and her attire negligently thrown about her. She answered in the affirmative. I walked in, took a stool, and quietly seated myself by the fire. The next object that attracted my attention was a finely-formed young Indian, resting his head between his hands, with his elbows on his knees. A long-bow rested against the log-wall near him, while a quantity of arrows and two or three racoon-skins lay at his feet. He moved not—he apparently breathed not. Accustomed to the habits of the Indians, and knowing that they pay little attention to the approach of civilised strangers, (a circum-

stance which in some countries is considered as evincing the apathy of their character,) I addressed him in French; a language not unfrequently partially known to the people in that neighbourhood. He raised his head, pointed to one of his eyes with his finger, and gave me a significant glance with the other. His face was covered with blood. The fact was, that about an hour before this, as he was in the act of discharging an arrow at a racoon in the top of a tree, the arrow had split upon the cord, and sprung back with such violence into his right eye as to destroy it for ever.

Feeling hungry, I inquired what sort of fare I might expect. Such a thing as a bed was not to be seen, but many large untanned bear and buffalo hides lay piled in a corner. I drew a fine time-piece from my breast, and told the woman that it was late, and that I was fatigued. She had espied my watch, the richness of which seemed to operate upon her feelings with electric quickness. She told me that there was plenty of venison and jerked buffalo meat, and that on removing the ashes I should find a cake. But my watch had struck her fancy, and her curiosity had to be gratified by an immediate sight of it. I took off the gold chain that secured it from around my neck, and presented it to her. She was all ecstasy, spoke of its beauty, asked me its value, and put the chain round her brawny neck, saying how happy the possession of such a watch would make her. Thoughtless, and as I fancied myself in so retired a spot secure, I paid little attention to her talk or her movements; I helped my dog to a good supper of venison, and was not long in satisfying the demands of my own appetite.

The Indian rose from his seat, as if in extreme suffering. He passed and repassed me several times, and once pinched me on the side so violently, that the pain nearly brought forth an exclamation of anger. I looked at him; his eye met mine, but his look was so forbidding that it struck a chill into the more nervous part of my system. He again seated himself, drew his butcher-knife from its greasy scabbard, examined its edge as I would do that of a razor suspected dull, replaced it, and again taking his tomahawk from his back, filled the pipe of it with tobacco, and sent me expressive glances whenever our hostess chanced to have her back towards us.

Never until that moment had my senses been awakened to the danger which I now suspected to be about me. I returned glance for glance to my companion, and rested well assured that, whatever enemies I might have, he was not of their number. I asked the woman for my watch, wound it up, and under pretence of wishing to see how the weather might probably be on the morrow, took up my gun, and walked out of the cabin. I slipped a ball into each barrel, scraped the edges of my flints, renewed the primings, and returning to the hut, gave a favourable account of my observations. I took a few bear-skins, made a pallet of them, and calling my faithful dog to my side, lay down, with my gun close to my body, and in a few minutes was to all appearance fast asleep.

A short time had elapsed, when some voices were heard, and from the corner of my eyes I saw two athletic youths making their entrance, bearing a dead stag on a pole. They disposed of their burden, and asking for whiskey, helped themselves freely to it. Observing me and the wounded Indian, they asked who I was, and why that rascal (meaning the Indian, who they knew understood not a word of English) was in the house. The mother—for so she proved to be—bade them speak less loudly, made mention of my watch, and took them to a corner, where a conversation took place, the purport of which it required little shrewdness in me to guess. I tapped my dog gently; he moved his tail, and with in-

describable pleasure I saw his fine eyes alternately fixed on me, and raised towards the trio in the corner. I felt that he perceived danger in my situation. The Indian exchanged a last glance with me.

The lads had eaten and drunk themselves into such condition, that I already looked upon them as *hors de combat*; and the frequent visits of the whiskey-bottle to the ugly mouth of their dam, I hoped would soon reduce her to a like state. Judge of my astonishment, reader, when I saw this incarnate fiend take a large carving-knife, and go to the grind-stone to whet its edge. I saw her pour the water on the turning machine, and watched her working away with the dangerous instrument, until the cold sweat covered every part of my body, in despite of my determination to defend myself to the last. Her task finished, she walked to her reeling sons, and said, "There, that'll soon settle him! Boys, kill you —, and then for the watch."

I turned, cocked my gun-locks silently, touched my faithful companion, and lay ready to start up and shoot the first who might attempt my life. The moment was fast approaching, and that night might have been my last in this world, had not Providence made preparations for my rescue. All was ready; the infernal hag was advancing slowly, probably contemplating the best way of despatching me, whilst her sons should be engaged with the Indian. I was several times on the eve of rising, and shooting her on the spot; but she was not to be punished thus. The door was suddenly opened, and there entered two stout travellers, each with a long rifle on his shoulder. I bounced up on my feet, and making them most heartily welcome, told them how well it was for me that they should have arrived at that moment. The tale was told in a minute. The drunken men were secured, and the woman, in spite of her defence and vociferations, shared the same fate. The Indian fairly danced with joy, and gave us to understand that, as he could not sleep for pain, he would watch over us. You may suppose we slept much less than we talked. The two strangers gave me an account of their once having been themselves in a somewhat similar situation. Day came, fair and rosy, and with it the punishment of our captives.

They were now quite sobered. Their feet were unbound, but their arms were still securely tied. We marched them into the woods off the road, and having used them as Regulators were wont to use such delinquents, we set fire to the cabin, gave all their skins and implements to the young Indian warrior, and proceeded well pleased towards the settlements.

During upwards of twenty-five years, when my wanderings extended to all parts of our country, this was the only time at which my life was in danger from my fellow-creatures. Indeed, so little risk do travellers run in the United States, that no one born there ever dreams of any to be encountered on the road; and I can only account for the occurrence by supposing that the inhabitants of the cabin were not Americans.

AUDUBON'S Ornithological Biography.

VICISSITUDES OF WAR.

How many circumstances occur during the heat of battle which are worth recording for their singularity! Amongst this number are the following:—Whilst I was giving some directions to a serjeant of the regiment, during the time we were under a smart fire from the enemy's guns on the 28th, he was suddenly wheeled about by the effect of a round shot, which struck the end of his knapsack, and tearing it from his back, scattered the contents of it in the air, without doing him the slightest injury. At the same moment I received a musket-ball, which struck the front of my cravat, which it tore, and passing under the collar of my coat, grazing the skin of my shoulder, escaped through an aperture of its own making. Not so fortunate was Lieutenant Galway, who,

during our first charge, received two musket-balls in his body, from the effect of which I found him, on returning to our ground, lying upon a heap of stones, and bleeding rapidly to death. Whilst we were rendering him every assistance (no medical man being with us), we were called away from our exertions by the return of the enemy; and when they were again driven back, and we regained our former ground, Lieutenant Galway was discovered lying upon his back where we had left him; his pulse had ceased to beat, and life to all appearance had passed away. "Is he beyond all hope, and can nothing be done for him?" inquired one of the party. The reply was, "Nothing—he is dead." At that moment, to our astonishment, he rose upon his seat, and staring wildly about him, with apparent surprise, said "Dead!" It was the last effort of nature; he had no sooner uttered this, than, falling upon his back, he died without a struggle.—*United Service Journal.*

THE LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

In many an hour, when, all alone,
I muse on days for ever flown,
At morning's dawn, or brighter noon,
Or 'neath the soft and silent moon—
Or when the twilight, pale and mild,
Comes stealing o'er the voiceless wild—
Thine image beams on Fancy's eye,
The brightest star in Memory's sky.

Nor only doth the lonely hour,
And pensive walk by twilight bower,
Or silent wood, or sounding shore,
Thy form of loveliness restore.
E'en while I smile amidst the gay,
My heart, my heart, is far away;
And from each beauteous form I see,
Still turns to sigh and think of thee.
But chief when gentle slumber brings
A balm to sorrow on its wings—
On weary limbs sweet healing pours,
Like falling dew on closing flowers—
Shuts out the world of toil and care,
But opes within a world more fair—
Restoring to the broken-hearted
The loved, the lost, the long-departed,
And many a vision of delight
That day denies to aching sight,—
Thy beauty on my lonely dreams
Then breaks in dear and dying gleams,
Through closing clouds, as glows awhile
The second rainbow's shadowing smile.
I feel thy phantom form's caress,
And o'er my brow each clustering tress,—
The soft warm pressure of thy cheek,—
And hear thy voice of music speak,
Soft as the witching accents given
By harp-strings to the winds of heaven.

Oh! mayst thou, through this fleeting scene,
Still be to me what thou hast been—
An angel-presence to control
Each erring impulse of my soul,—
That all in woman 'neath the sky,
For which the heart can seek or sigh.
But if, surviving youth's bright day,
Like all that's fair, to fade away,—
When sorrow comes on circling years,
To strew the path of smiles with tears,—
To steal from eyes their morning light;
And dim them with a shade of night,—
Decay's dark traces to disclose,
And blend the lily with the rose;
Far, far from me may time or care
Steal o'er thee with their withering power:—
For, oh! methinks I could not bear
To see thee fade, my flower!

JOHN MALCOLM.

EAGLES IN THE HEBRIDES.

WHEN it has young, the eagle provides abundantly for them; and instances have been known in the Hebrides of people obtaining an additional supply in times of scarcity, by climbing, or rather descending to its nest, which is generally nearer the summit than the base of the cliff. I have never heard an instance of its attacking a person when robbing its nest, and only two of its having made any attempt upon a human being.

A man, in the island of Lewis, having crept to the edge of a shelf overhanging the nest of an eagle, was waiting the arrival of the birds, for the purpose of shooting them, when one of them, sweeping silently along the top of the cliff, struck him unawares with its wing. The man, however, kept his hold.

Among some rugged crags at the lower end of Loch Suaineabad, in the island, a pair of these annually rear their young. A woman, who had been on the moors looking after cattle, was descending a rude path near the crags, when two eagles attacked her with great fury. She defended herself, however, and escaped without material injury.

When in sight of a person watching near the nest, they fly around him at a respectful distance, sailing with outstretched wings, occasionally uttering a savage scream of anger, and allowing their legs to dangle, with outspread talons, as if to intimidate him. I have observed them thus occupied, when on the edge of a precipice five hundred feet high, with a very steep slope above me, bounded by rocks, and from which I could not have made my escape, had the birds been resolute.

In the Hebrides, the raven is perpetually harassing the eagle, which, from its superior agility, it can safely do; although I have never seen it venture to come into actual contact with its powerful adversary. I have seen eagles fighting in the air; their motions were then beautiful, and displayed considerable agility. When the higher one approached the other, the latter threw itself on its back, and received the foe with outstretched talons. Their shrill screams resounded to a great distance.

The usual mode of destroying eagles in the Hebrides is the following:—In a remote part, usually on an eminence, the declivity of a mountain, or the margin of a precipice in which eagles breed, a pit, about six feet in length and three in breadth, is dug to the depth of two or three feet. The turf removed from it is arranged as a wall, so as to deepen the pit a foot or two more. Some sticks are then laid across it, together with heath, and the whole is covered over with fresh turf taken from some distance. An opening is left at one end, large enough to admit a person, and at the other is formed an aperture six inches in diameter. The door is closed by a bundle of heath; and in this state the pit, or hut, is left until all traces of labour are effaced from it by the weather, and the keen eye of the eagle, as he sails over it, can distinguish nothing but a tuft of heath, similar to those around. A carcass is then procured; a sheep that has been found dead on the hills, or an old and useless horse that has been taken out and killed for the purpose. It is placed at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards from the hut, so as to be visible from within through the small aperture. The hunter enters, spreads a layer of heath on the floor, closes the door behind by pulling into it a bundle of heath, lays him down on his side, places the muzzle of his gun in the aperture, and prepares for a tedious watch. Hours often pass, and yet nothing makes its appearance. A raven appears, and frequently many in succession; but as the hunter knows not how near the eagle may be, he refrains from shooting, or even disturbing them. Sometimes a gull, of the large black-backed species, or a burgomaster, or even a herring-gull, appears with its unsullied plumage, walking anxiously about, but not daring to

attempt a participation of the feast so long as the ravens remain unsatisfied. At length hurried noises are heard from the carrion birds, which look around in an anxious manner; the rushing, as of a current of air, comes on the ear of the lie-in-wait, who brings his gun to his shoulder; and as the birds disperse, he sees the eagle quietly seating itself on the carcass, gathering up his large wings, and preparing to commence the banquet. Now is the time—now or never. Forth rushes the little shower of buck-shot, the terrified gulls and ravens fly off screaming and croaking, and the author of their panic, kicking out the bundle of heath from the door of the hut, drags himself into open day, and runs up to the carcass, on which is stretched the once-formidable skimmer of the clouds, now vainly struggling in the agonies of death.

But a more animating scene presents itself:—

"Why flames the far summit? Why shoot to the blast

You embers like stars from the firmament cast?

'Tis the fire-shower of ruin all dreadfully driven

From his eyrie—"

The farmer, breathing vengeance for the massacre perpetrated upon the young lambs in spring, has assembled his shepherds and cottars. They proceed—one carrying a coil of rope, another a bundle of dry heath, and a third a burning peat—toward the further brow of the mountain, where the fissured and shelved precipice hangs over the foamy margin of the Atlantic. Far in the west, in mist and melancholy grandeur, rises the lone isle of St. Kilda. The great ocean is spread around, its impetuous currents sweeping along the rugged shores. Strings of gannets, cormorants, and guillemots are seen winding around the promontories; while here and there, over the curling waves, is seen hovering a solitary gull. They have reached the brink of the cliffs, over which the more timid scarce dare venture to cast a glance; for almost directly under their feet is the unfathomable sea, heaving its heavy billows some hundred feet from the place to which they cling. The eagles are abroad, soaring at a cautious distance in circles, uttering wild and harsh screams, and as they sweep past displaying their powerful talons. One of the men fastens the rope to his body, passing it under his arm, and securing it to his breast by a firm knot. The rest dig holes with their heels in the turf, and sitting down in a row, take firm hold of the cord. The adventurer looks over the brink of the cliff, marks the projecting shelf which overhangs the eagle's nest, and is gradually lowered towards it, bearing in one hand the bundle of heath, with a cord attached to it, and the peat burning in the middle, and with the other pushing himself from the angular projections of the rock. At length he arrives on the shelf, and calls to those above to slacken the rope, but keep a firm hold of it. Then creeping forwards, and clinging to the unstable tufts of indigenous grasses, he looks downwards, and ascertains the precise position of the nest, in which are two eaglets covered with white down, skeletons of fishes, birds, and lambs lying heaped around them. Blowing the flame, he kindles the bundle of combustibles, and rapidly lowers it rightly into the nest. The young birds scream and hiss, and throw themselves into strange attitudes of defence. The heath smokes and crackles, and at length blazes into full flame. Then the sticks, seaweeds, wool, and feathers of the nest catch fire; and the ascending column of smoke indicates to the ropemen above that the deed is doing. Flames and fumes conceal the young birds from the avenger's gaze, but he stirs not until they have abated, and he sees the huge eyrie with its contents reduced to ashes.

Birds have feelings as well as men, and those of the eagle are doubtless acute; for the old birds wheel and scream along the face of the rock for many days in succession, and as by this time the summer is far advanced, they form no new nest.

Quarterly Journal of Agriculture.

DESTITUTION AND CRIME.

THE sole use of government is the protection of society, or, in other words, the well-being of the governed; and if in any community there is a large proportion whose condition and circumstances are such as to expose them to destitution on the one hand, or to crime on the other, the objects of government in such a community are very partially attained. That this is the case in Great Britain, to an extent quite disproportionate to our power and our privileges, and our standing as one of the greatest nations of the earth, is unfortunately too true. In the words of an able writer,—

"Crime is a weed that cannot be eradicated by destroying its blossoms upon the surface of the earth; the growth can only be stopped by destroying the roots, at whatever depth they be, or however wide they may be scattered, though hid from sight."

In England "to catch a thief requires an expensive as well as complicated machinery; and when he is caught, the difficulty is how to keep him. There are governors to receive him, turnkeys to wash him and lock him up, squirrel-like wheels called tread-mills to work him, chaplains to preach to him, and prison inspectors to make reports about him. Yet, notwithstanding all this trouble to so many individuals, and the great expense incurred by the honest part of the community to reform the wicked ones, it still unfortunately happens that no reformation takes place, since the same rogues go the round of all the prisons, and are as well known to the turnkeys as tax-gatherers to the parishioners.

"Crime must be checked out of, not in, prison. When a man has entered those walls, he is an outcast in his own opinion for ever. It matters not so materially whether he is afterwards recognised by others whom he may have met in prison; he unfortunately recognises himself, and in this self-recognition he is overwhelmed with self-debasement. He may assume a reckless bearing, he may be the most swaggering among his crew, and throw off apparently all idea of thought or feeling; but in reality it is not so, for the man when alone and uninfluenced by excitement deeply feels his degradation, and to avoid that silent monitor, his conscience, for that is never lost (except, they say, to lawyers), he rushes into fresh excitement, and courts a stimulus to drive self from his recollection by perpetrating some deep scheme of roguery.

"Though the benevolent chaplain in prison may approach the offender and break the silence of his cell by holy admonitions and earnest exhortations—though the heart of the wicked man may soften at the time, and repentance throw a transient light upon the darkness of his inward thoughts, even though he may resolve to follow the precepts of virtue daily poured into his ear, yet when he emerges from his solitude—when he again commingles with mankind, and finds himself in the busy world moneyless and masterless, intrusted with the secret of his own disgrace, all his resolutions of reform are broken like cobwebs, and in the privacy of crime he seeks a maintenance, though perhaps not willingly, but through actual necessity, having neither means to live nor character to obtain employment. The governor of the Giltspur-street Compter can bear witness how many prisoners have, even previous to their discharge, earnestly implored him to give them some employment on leaving the prison, to prevent their falling into crime to obtain their food. A well-known pickpocket in the city, on being asked what he should do on his liberation, very frankly said, 'Thieve rather than starve; for no one will employ me, and a milk handkerchief will get me a meal.'

"Townsend, the celebrated officer of Bow-street, gave evidence before the police committee in 1816:—

"George Barrington, the well-known swindler and pickpocket, was once tried, acquitted, and dismissed by Lord Chief Justice Eyre with a flimsy string of good-advice sentences about turning his abilities to better purposes; after which Barrington, after thanking his lordship, says, 'Now, my lord, I am ready to go into any service to work for my living if your lordship can find

me a master.' Why, what was the reply to that?—why, it was this—"Gaoler, take the man away!"

"Who would employ him?" continued old Townsend, whose blunt loquacity was irrepressible; 'who would think of employing him? Why, the thing was really farcical. I have heard magistrates say, "Young man, you are much to be pitied; I am very sorry for you," and the rest of it; "you should leave off this bad course of life." Yes,' says Townsend, 'all this is very fine, but it's better said than done, for where is there any person to employ these poor wretches? They have often come and said to me, "Mr. Townsend, we do not thieve from disposition, we thieve because we can get no employment; our character is damned, and nobody will have us." Well, and so it is,' continued the shrewd old officer; 'there is no question about it, gentlemen.'

"Old Townsend is quite correct. Unless there is a fostering hand to aid the helpless sinner by giving him employment, or the means of seeking an honest course of life on his return to society, all the prison plans are but chimerical: nearly one-third of the prison population are recommitted.

"The fact is, we begin at the wrong end of the subject. It is to the low vicinities, to the herds of idle and neglected children in the streets—it is to those sinks of iniquity the receivers of stolen property, that attention should be turned in order to check the current of crime.

"A man who is free would shudder at the thought of being locked up for three or four years, but if he finds that he is to be locked up for that period, the human mind adapts itself to circumstances, and, after a short time, every day of imprisonment becomes less irksome—use is second nature. This is confirmed by the fact that, after the destruction of the Bastille, many unfortunate wretches who had been long incarcerated petitioned to be placed again in prison; for long imprisonment, after a certain period, ceases to be a punishment, and daily loses its rigour from the very period of its commencement. A man, after being so long caged, turns loose upon society like a savage dog whose nature had been rendered more savage by being chained up. He will not be changed except that he will be morosely worse, and he will be ready to commit crimes of the worst nature. This will be the character of our criminal population under the system of solitary confinement and long imprisonments.

"The results of data are, first, that the cost of prisons is enormous; secondly, that an honest labourer is worse off in point of daily cost than a criminal in Newgate; thirdly, that there is a circulating mass of crime in the metropolis constantly recommitted to prison (nearly one-third of the total number of commitments); fourthly, that there is an alarming proportion (15 per cent.) of the criminal population under 17 years of age, and that upwards of 4,300 juvenile offenders were committed in one year to prison.

"Suppose a young pickpocket can only steal property which he can sell for 2s., and there is not an urchin who does not expend that amount, (the average expended by each is nearer 3s. than 2s.) the daily sum expended by these juvenile depredators is 430l.; but what they sell for 2s. to the receivers is worth 4s. at least, therefore the loss to the community is 860l. daily, or 313,900l. annually, for 4,300 young thieves, which is not one quarter of the total number in the metropolis.

"The purlieus of St. Giles's, Seven Dials, Westminster, Clerkenwell, Lisson-grove, the Borough, the Minorities, and Stepney, are the nurseries of crime. It is to these vicinities that attention should be turned, in order to meet the evil in its bud. There is a squalidness and filth about the houses and the inmates, which seems to operate upon their dispositions, and to render their characters and pursuits as loathsome as their dwellings. Cleanliness of habit is an index of cleanliness of mind; and cleanliness should be enforced in these districts, which are now filthy even to unwholesomeness. It is in these wretched districts that herds of men, but little removed from the savage state, are grouped. It is from these regions that the population of our gaols is supplied; and in these eddies of civilised society is gathered all the filth, the crime, the savage recklessness which is subsequently carried to the

antipodes, and causes the sad and melancholy statement from New Zealand, that the white settlers have more to fear from the white man, their countryman, a member once of a refined state of society, than they have to dread from the savage and the cannibal! But whence came this white savage? From this vast metropolis, the seat of wealth, splendour, and refinement! It is in the purlieus of crime that the zealous should labour to disseminate the holy precepts of our religion, and man there dwelling should be taught the relative duties of society. This is the fountain-head of that dark stream of pollution, and it is at the source that the evil should be grappled. This is the plainest and most common-sense preventive. Home missionaries and well-directed philanthropy would do more real service to the cause of humanity than at first might strike the imagination."

THE MILLIONS OF THE ANCIENTS.

EGYPT of old pursued the arts of peace,
And wit and learning bless'd the shores of Greece;
Imperial Rome, amid her ruins hoar,
Left proofs of greatness never reach'd before;—
But what their triumphs? Whose sad hands were they
That piled the pyramids, to last for aye?
Who raised the walls, who built each mighty gate
With which high Thebes girt herself in state?
Who rear'd old Babylon's most gorgeous fanes?
Who shaped of Luxor the august remains?
What were the millions when Athena's name
For art and learning was the first to fame?
What were the multitudes when Rome was great?
What rights had they, or value in the state?—
All slaves and helots! Slaves were they whose hands
Uprear'd the pyramids on Egypt's sands;
Slaves built the city with the brazen wall
And hundred gates, more marvellous than all;
Slaves, to be lash'd, and tortured, and resold,
Or maim'd and murder'd for a fine of gold:
Helots degraded, scarce esteem'd as man,
Having no rights, for ever under ban,
Were half the world when ancient Homer sung,
And wit and wisdom flow'd from Plato's tongue;
Slaves were the swarming multitudes of Rome,
Having no hope, no thought of better doom;
Fetter'd in body and enslaved in mind,
Their mental eyeballs sear, and dark, and blind,
They crawl'd mere brutes; and if they dared complain,
Were lash'd and tortured until tame again!

And thus the many, since the world begun,
Have been for ever sacrificed for one.
The weak have died to satisfy the strong,
And earth has groan'd with oft-repeated wrong;
And still the many, knowing not their might,
Deep sunk in error's most appalling night,
Have greeted loudest with the voice of praise
The greatest scourges born in evil days;
Sung songs of triumph, and their incense burn'd,
To honour those whom most they should have spurn'd.

Hope of the World, by CHARLES MACKAY.

MOONLIGHT VIEW UPON THE NILE.

On returning to the Kandja, we threw open our windows, to enjoy the scenery. Never did the Nile appear so beautiful. Glittering like molten silver beneath the moon, it seemed to stretch away interminably towards the west, among numerous islands and steep pyramidal rocks, which rising to a great height, threw their mingling shadows over the calm surface, concealing its extent, and creating the appearance of a vast lake. Nothing in all Switzerland—on which at the moment my thoughts were dwelling—could exceed in grandeur or beauty the magnificent reach of the Nile; which seemed to realise all that poetry has feigned of fairy-land—a paradise of rocks and waters, sprinkled with the splendid vegetation of the south, wrapped in unbroken silence, and lighted up by a moon and stars of inexpressible brightness. I lost sight with regret of its unrivalled beauties escaping one after another from the eye, as the boat glided rapidly down the stream through the same splendid scenery all the way to Philæ, where we arrived late at night.—*St. John's Egypt and Mohammed Ali.*

THE PRAYER OF A COLOURED MAN.

Written on the Mississippi, May 1840.

GREAT Father of this mighty Earth,
Of beauteous worlds beside,
How long shall tyranny have berth
O'er mine and me to ride?
Shall time ne'er bring
A cheering spring?
Am I a slave—a soulless thing?

If I am doom'd to live a slave,
To toil for pale mankind—
A crawling creature to the grave—
O, why have I a mind?
How long shall keep
In moral sleep
My mind, that only wakes to weep?

If I am doom'd to live a slave,
Why have I human form?—
The form divine my Maker gave,
And rather not a worm;
Or creeping thing
That bears the sting,
Yet knows not of its suffering?

If I am doom'd to live a slave,
Ne'er let affection come
Within my breast—ne'er let me cleave
To wife, or child, or home!
For what are ties
To him who lies
Chain'd, even to the heart and eyes?

If I am doom'd to live a slave,
Let no sweet flower or tree
Its blossoms spread, or branches wave
In beauty before me;
But bloom confin'd
To human kind
I cannot see—a brute is blind!

If I am doom'd to live a slave,
Shut up my ears and tongue;
So I, a slave, no sense may have
Of what is said or sung—
But crawl along
Amid the throng,
Untaught by speech, unfired by song.

If I'm not doom'd to live a slave,
Let me not bow the knee;
Let me no more of mortals crave,
When I should crave of Thee!—
But if design'd
For such a blind
Great God, pray take me back my mind.

ALEXANDER HUMEL.

THE PICTURESQUE AT NAPLES.

A gentleman said that the steam-boat was so beautiful, so picturesque, so enchanting, that he shed tears because he could not show it to a lady of his acquaintance.—*Von Raumer's Italy.*

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